NEPAL'S DOMESTIC CRISIS 1832-1841

by

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Prithvi Narayan Shah, the King of Gorkha and a crafty politician, succeeded in conquering the whole of Nepal in 1769 and establishing a Central Government at Kathmandu in 1770. After his death in 1775, the political position of the ruling family had been thoroughly undermined and two important families of the valley Thapas and Pandeys-fought openly for political supremacy over the country. The political system up to 1841 could be characterised as a highly segmented, pyramidal structure dominated by a handful of Kshatriya families.

Rajendra Vir Vikram Shah, son of Girvan Yudha Vikram Shah, became the king of Nepal in 1816 at the age of two. After the assassination of Ran Bahadur Shah in April 1806, the authority of the State passed entirely into the hands of Bhim Sen.[1] Bhim Sen Thapa was the Prime Minister of Nepal from 1804 and now he made an earnest effort to consolidate his power. Being vigorous, ambitious and unprincipled, he prepared a plan to liquidate all his political opponents. Nearly seventy-seven leaders of the opposition faction were either murdered or executed in the aftermath of the assassination. Thus the Thapa family emerged as the dominant group in the Court.[2] After the assassination of Ran Bahadur Shah in 1806, Maharani Tripura Sundari widow of the last King and grand-mother of Rajendra Vir Vikram Shah, took the regency of the Kingdom. From now onwards, the authority of the Prime Minister in Nepal, transcended that of the King.[3] This system continued in practice till 1951. After the death of the boy King (the son of the Brahman Girl) in 1816, Lalita Tripura was retained as the regent on behalf of the infant King, Rajendra Bikram Shah. With the regency of Lalita Tripura Sundari and the Ministry of Bhim Sen Thapa, Nepal entered upon an era of consolidation and progress.[4]

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1 Hodgson Collection, India Office Library, Vol. I (Microfilmed), p. 188.

2 Leo, E. Rose, Nepal, Strategy for Survival, p. 80.

3 Sylvain, Levi, Nepal, pp, 319-320.

4 Tuker, Nepal, p. 95.

Unfortunately Lalita Tripura Sundari died on the 6th of April, 1832.[5] She was a talented honest and virtuous lady. It was this remarkable woman, faithful as a wife, politic and patriotic as a princess, who ruled Nepal as Queen regent during the whole period.[6] She was an able, constant and farseeing regent and the political equilibrium of the country was suddenly upest by her death. As subsequent events showed, her death was a great disaster for Bhim Sen. She had been his firm ally and constant supporter against jealousy of his brother Rambir Singh, who was general commandant of the Nepalese Army. Bhim Sen thus lost his dependable ally and was now alone in the political field.

Bhim Sen was afraid of his political fate. All the employments in Nepal were annual till 1951, beginning from the Prime Minister to the humblest soldier. All await the 'Paijni' or 'Paijani'. which must either confirm or reject them brutally from the service of the State.[7] However this danger was averted and he was invested with the premiership for the ensuing year in September 1832. Rambir Singh was determined to cause harm to the Prime Minister, Bhim Sen and was persisting in his endeavour to get curtailed his power as much as possible. Mathabar Singh, was the nephew of Bhim Sen. He was a young men of talent, energy and grasping ambition, but was becoming in common with his uncle an object of common alarm to Rambir and his faction.[8] He was disgusted with the dirty politics of the court and wanted to visit the Terai.

Rambir Singh was not the only political opponent to Bhim Sen. Another leading Chief opposed to Bhim Sen was Bukhteshwar Singh, the Governor of Palpa. These two had managed to attach considerable portion of the troops to their own interests. After assuming the charge of the office of Prime Minister, Bhim Sen secured the nomination of his nephew Mathabar Sing to the Government of Palpa, a post of considerable importance. This nomination was not liked by Bukhteshwar Singh. He issued a statement than he would forfeit life rather that the governorship.[9] The group opposed to Bhim Sen gradually and steadily increased in strength, but the Minister resisted all measures of curtailing his power and infiuence. However Bhim Sen tried to find out a solution. Bukhteshwar, who was a Colonel, was promoted to the rank of a Lieutenant

5 Hodgson Collection, India Office Library, Vol. I (Microfilmed) p. 23.
6 W. W. Hunter, Life of Brian Hodgson, p. 98.
7 Sylvain, Levi, Nepal, p. 367.
8 Foreign Secret consultations, 1841, p. 239.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 241.

General. This promotion was not hailed with joy by several chiefs including Dal Bahadur.

In this way Bhim Sen was trying to consolidate his position after the death of Lalita Tripura Sundari. In 1833, Bhim Sen and his family were in possession of every provincial command throughout Nepal, with the exception of the Government of Doti, which was held by a Choutria. It was during the close of the year 1834 that Ranjung, son of the late Damodar Pandey, petitioned the king for the restitution of his family honours and estates, which had been confiscated in 1833. The sudden revival of claims secretly extinct for thirty-one years, struck all persons with astonishments, togethar with the favourable manner in which the king received the petition. Ranjung had been supported by an anti-Bhim Sen faction. This faction had succeeded in rousing the jealousy of the King against the overbearing Minister. From that time might be reckoned the commencement of the counter-revolution and of those intrigues of Kale Pandey and others, which eventually succeeded, in the overthrow of their rivals and in repaying the cruelties, they had themselves suffered at his hands.[10] The situation then developing in Nepal was summarised by Sir W. W. Hunter as follows :—

"By the beginning of 1835 seven factions had developed at the court of Nepal, all requiring to be carefully watched by the Resident, each from time to time coquetting for his support and from time to time making appeals to the popular war-like sentiment in Nepal against the presence of the foreign representative at their capital. Hodgson had the delicate task of maintaining an attitude of dignified noninterfeience towards them all, which should not improperly pledge his Government on the one hand nor give offence on the other." The principal dramatis personae in the series of tragedies that followed might be briefly enumerated.

"First, the faineant king was ambitious of becoming actual ruler. After suffering many degradations, the poor king was finally deposed in 1847, and died a state prisoner.

Secondly, the king's chief wife, known as the senior queen, who tried to assert her authority by the help of the Pandey, died on her way to Benaras apparently from jungle fever in 1841.

Third, the King's second wife, known as the junior queen, hoped to rise to power by supporting the Thapas. After a long struggle, she was afterwards exiled to the Indian plains.

10 *Ibid.*

Fourth, the Chautariyas or collateral branches of the royal race, with hereditary claims to high office, kept down during the long supremacy of Bhim Sen, reasserted their rights as his powers waned."[11]

Though thick cloud of adversity was hovering over Bhim Sen, yet he was struggling with his full strength to extricate himself from the calamity. The death of Lalita Tripura Sundari was a worst disaster for him. The changed political situation taught him to modify his policy towards the English in India. He followed a more conciliatory policy. He decided to send a complimentary misson to the Governor General of India in November 1835. This Mission left Kathmandu for Calcutta headed by Mathabar Singh. The King had desired that one of the most distinguished chiefs of Nepal should be allowed to proceed to England as a traveller. The king termed this as a splendid complimentary Mission. Mathabar Sing with a retinue consisting of a regiment of 650 picked troops with numerous followers and 60 horses started accordingly on 27th November accompanied by Campbell and taking charge of the latter and presents for the Governor-General and the king of England. The idea for the Mission emanated from Bhim Sen's mind and the king had approved it. Bhim Sen had thought that Mathabar Sigh "shall have the benefit of direct communication with the sovereign of England or his viceroy in India".[12] The presents which were brought by the Nepalese Mission of 1836 for the Governor-General and the President of the Board of Control, consisted chiefly of magnificent furs and embroidered dresses, Khukaris (short thick swords) and some enormous tusks of elephants. There were also a leopard and a tiger, said to have been nursed by a woman. There was also a thinocers brought as a present from Nepal but it escaped on the very first day of its arrival in Calcutta. The total retinue of 3000 accompanied Mathabar Singh. The Company received the Mission in a dignified way and the total expenses incurred by the Company's Government in entertaining and receiving the Mission went up to Rs. 26,249. But the Mission did not succeed in its object. Mathabar Singh returned to Kathmandu on the 28th March, 1836 without proceeding to London. The very fact that he was the leader of the Mission lent a distinction to his merit. This was not liked by various opposition groups. The public life of Nepal had sunk to a very low ebb and in order to malign Mathabar Singh, Ranjung Pandey brought an open accusation against him for cohabiting with the late brother's widow.

11 W. W. Hunter, Life of Brian Hodgson, pp. 142-143.
12 Foreign Secret Consultations, 1841, p. 247.

The enquiry did not lead to any result and ultimately it was dropped. Mathabar Singh escaped scatheless.[13]

The year 1837 was marked by measures calculated to mortify and humble Bhim Sen. This year also indicated that the long discarded Kale Pandey was becoming an object of considerations. By the secret machinations of the latter, the Viceroy of Lhasa required that the quinquennial embassies to Peking from Nepal hitherto conducted by Bhim Sen should be dispatched by the King himself and solicited for the next visit. So in July was dispatched one of the collateral branches of the royal family by name Pushkar Shah Choutria, on a Mission.[14] In February 1838 during the Pajani or annual rotation of appointment, several of the Minister's favourites were turned out of employment. Mathabar Singh was also deprived of his command. Rambir Singh continued in his office. Ranjung Pandey had for sometime foreseen the result of Bhim Sen's blind ambition.

There was another bolt from the blue for Bhim Sen in July 1837. The King's youngest son died suddenly on the 24th July and a rumour was circulated quickly through the palace that the child had fallen a victim to the poison intended for his mother, the Maharani. This was followed by a report that the instigator of this deed was Bhim Sen or some one of his party. The alarm soon spread from the palace through the city and in the confusion that issued, Ranjung Pandey was suddenly appointed Minister of the state. Bhim Sen was seized, ironed and thrown into prison. It was a worst phase of Bhim Sen's political career. Along with Bhim Sen, other family members were also heavily punished. The whole of his family were placed under arrest. Mathabar Singh was also dealt in the same way of his uncle. The physician, who had attended the child was condemned to torture and denounced Bhim Sen, implicating also the Royal physician and other physicians. The Royal physician himself on being questioned, revealed many important facts. Shortly the physician, who had poisoned the child, was tortured to death.[15]

In the meantime in view of his sudden nomination to the premiership, Ranjung was appointed Kaji and Mulki Diwan. But while these convulsions were eagerly brought by Kale Pandey to bring himself into power, there was a feeling of alarm in the minds of many persons at the probable results of it; the most prominent was Raghu-

13 *Ibid.*, p. 249.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

nath Pandit. The dynastic party of "royal collaterals" remonstrated with the King. Ranjung was forced to make over the Prime Ministership to Raghunath Pandit. The chief royal physician was restored to favour. Bhim Sen and his nephew Mathabar Singh were released at the intercession of Lakshmi Devi, the Junior Queen. He was brought into full Durbar, where the old man fell at the King's feet and was forgiven with the restoration to him of his garden house, which had been confiscated during the late commotion and the settlement of a pension of 3,000 rupees.[16] He also had an audience with the King and both the queens. And again the next day he was presented in full Durbar with a dress of honour and a caprisoned horse. He returned to his garden house followed by crowds of soldiers and people of the city. Mathabar Singh and Shamsher Jung (Bhim Sen's adopted son) had also audience in full Durbar. They were also presented with dresses of honour and horses and were restored to their confiscated property.[17]

Depressed and alarmed by the reinstatement of the Thapas, Ranjung solicited permission to return to Benaras, but the King did not agree. In the meantime Raghunath continued in charge of the current duties of the State.

The opening of the year 1838 passed without any particular attempt to review the convulsions of the previous one. Ranjung was trying to gain over the support of the Maharani to his cause. Bhim Sen and Mathabar Singh continued at large, though out of employment, and were permitted to attend Darbar both Public and private. Their popularity with the army continued unabated and eight commissioned officers and eighty men of the Shernath regiment resigned and called themselves as private followers to Mathbabar Singh. In February 1838, the success of Ranjung's intrigues with the Maharani was revealed in breaking out of violent dissensions in the palace between the queens. The Junior queen advocated Bhim Sen's restoration and the Maharani opposed this proposal. Being enraged at the attitude of the Junior queen, she furiously left the palace declaring she would never return, unless her will was obeyed and she retired to Pashupati Nath for sometime. In March 1838, Mathabar Singh was permitted under the ostensible pretext of catching elephants to go to the Terai Jungles and he took the opportunity to proceed into the plains. It was rumoured that he intended to prosecute his way to Lahore

16 *Ibid.*, p. 255.
17 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

for obtaining service under Ranjit Singh, the king of the Punjab. Mathabar Singh proceeded on to Benaras, where he waited for further orders from the Durbar. At last the Durbar sent Har Prasad, a messanger, with presents and a picture of the King of Nepal for Ranjit Singh. Occasional letters were recieved from Mathabar Singh, who was on way to Lahore. In May 1838, the news of his arrest in his attempt to cross the Sutlej at night reached Kathmandu and exercised considerable sensation. However Mathabar Singh was permitted by the Government of India to proceed on his journey by the end of the year. The news of his release caused surprise at Kathmandu and Bhim Sen failed to seize the opportunity of proclaiming that it had been brought by his influence with the British.[18]

Meanwhile party feeling and internal commotion ran high in Nepal and the Maharani, in addition to her determination to promote Ranjung to the Ministry was suspected of plotting the deposition of the king and placing her own son on the throne and the expulsion of the Residency from Nepal. In July, she was nearly gaiing her point with respect to Ranjung, who would have been made premier but for the dissuasion of Raghunath Pandit, who warned the Kin that by nominating him, he would cause disgust and drive Mathabar Singh, Randut Singh and many other chiefs, openly to seek protection from the English.[19] These dissuasions were however listened to but for a short time served to redouble family dissensions. The queen again left Kathmandu and declared that she would never return, unless the throne was abdicated in favour of her son and Ranjung was oppointed Prime Minister. Raghunath Pandit did not expect support from the king or the queen. So he resigned the premiership. All the Chiefs held meekly aloof from assistance and to add to the king's torments, he was assailed by imposters, who so effectually wrought on his fears as to compel him to quit the palace.[20]

The year 1839 marked a real dividing line in the political career of Bhim Sen Thapa, the deposed Prime Minister of Nepal. Though he had been released from the imprisonment, but his political opponents were very much active to cause his complete dawnfall. As the central Government was very weak, so the dawnfall of Bhim Sen appeared imminent. The Government had no domestic policy. Only self-interest dominated the home policy. The Pandeys in league with the palace,

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*, p. 260

20 *Ibid.*

started the old conspiracy against Bhim Sen. So the persecutions of the Thapas were revived in March and the charges of poisoning again 'set in agitation'. The court physicians were seized on the first blush of proceeding and questioned in the hope of further implicating Bhim Sen. Bhim sen's opponents were afraid lest Mathabar Singh might go over to the English. They thought that if this could happen, then the execution of Bhim sen would be a difficult task. It was reported about this time that the Durbar had hired secret agents to poison Mathabar Singh in the Punjab. Bhim Sen had been reduced to a lowest station in life. Finding no alternative, he made an appeal to the British Resident for protection and aid of the British Government. The accusations preferred against the court physician were of poisoning the Maharani. They were urged to confess their guilty motives. To implicate Bhim Sen, the king himself had an interview with the Resident on this subject. The Resident stressed on the insufficiency of the evidence against the parties.[21] Ranjung was made the sole Minister in April 1839 and Raghunath was made subordinate to him, to the disgust of all the Choutrias and other influential chiefs. Anticipating a tragic destiny, the court physicians killed themslves in despair. The Junior Rani was in the greatest apprehension for her children. Bhim Sen's brother became Faqir as a precautionary measure.

These disgusting persecutions continued throughout the ensuing month, with incereased rigour and barbarity. The member of the family and relations of the royal physician (who was crucified earlier) were seized. Five had their noses cut off and eleven after being tortured in the hope of extorting confessions, were given to perpetual slavery as outcasts. The physicians Ekdev and Eksuriya were also tortured for the same purpose. Bhim Sen was again confined in his house, which was surrounded by soldiers.[22] It was now no secret that these persecutions arose solely from the machinations of Ranjung Pandey and the Maharani. The Maharani wanted the king's abdication in favour of her eldest son. The Minister was supposed to be devising every means to lure Mathabar Singh back to Nepal.

The end cf Bhim Sen was now inevitable. By 18th May, the persecution of the unfortunate ex-minister was revived. He was formally arraigned on the basis of certain papers purporting to be confessions of

21 *Ibid.*, p. 267.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

the physician Ekdev, which alleged that he had at Bhim Sen's suggestion poisoned the younger widow of the late Raja Girvan Yudha Vikram Shah. Another paper, alleged to from the widow of Bakhteshwar Singh, accused him of having poisoned the king himself. The third paper was also produced, as written by Bhim Sen's younger brother Rambir Singh (Governor of Palpa) solemnly cautioning the king and the queen against Bhim Sen's well known malpractices. Bhim Sen thus beset, courageously defended himself and demanded from the Government, why if such charges had really been made, they had not been produced against him on his first arrest in 1837 ? He denounced the papers as forgeries and called for confrontation with his accusers. But his defence and his appeals were set aside. It was not a regular trial. There had been no rule of law in Nepal during this period. Bhim Sen had no supporter in the court and not a voice was raised on his behalf throughout the Durbar. The chiefs sat in dejected silence and the king giving away to or fearing a burst of indignation denounced him as a traitor[23] and had him hurried off in chains to prison.

Thus Bhim Sen's political opponents again dragged him into prison. It is strange that a Prime Minister of an independent country should be declared traitor without due process of law. But this was possible in Nepal, where there was no rule of law. Bhim Sen was the sole ruler of the country till 1832. But now he had been reduced to zero. All sorts of insults were hurled on him. He had lost all hopes. The earth was slipping under his feet. His ears were assailed from day to day with threats of renewed torments, with being exposed, plunged up to neck in heaps of human ordure and filth, with having his wife paraded naked throughout the city. Though fortune had deserted him long ago, but he could not swallow this bitter pill. How a man could tolerate this kind of insult ? So, out of frustation and despair, he committed suicide on July 20, 1839.[24] He died on July 29, 1839. This was the kind of treatment meted out to a man, who had tried his utmost for the consolidation of his country after the ravages of the Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814-16. His body, by the order of the king, was placed on the banks of Bagmati and denied all favoured rites, a guard being placed over it by night and by day, to watch that none approached it but jackals and vultures.

Hodgson sent a report to the Government of India in this way; "Thus has perished the great and able statesman who for more than

23 *Ibid.*, p. 269.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 270.

thirty years had ruled this kingdom with more than regal sway, just two years after his sudden fall from power in 1837. He was indeed a man born to exercise dominion over his fellows alike by the means of command and the persuasion. Nor am I aware of any native statesman of recent times, except Ranjit Singh, who is, all things, considered worthy to be compared with the late General Bhim Sen of Nepal".[25] But Bhim Sen's political opponents were still not satisfied. They were still poisoning the ears of the king. So a decree was issued by the Government that none of the Thapa clan should ever receive public employment for seven generations. His family and immediate relations, who had been banished to Bhote, where they were treated with utmost rigour, were removed still further eastward among the snows. All rent-free tenures granted by Bhim Sen were to be resumed; also all lands granted by the regent Rani during and after Ran Bahadur's sojourn at Benaras were confiscated.[26]

The death of Bhim Sen not only brought disaster to Nepal, which culminated in the Kot Massacre of 1846, but it also produced tensions in the relations between the Company and Nepal. Bhim Sen had exercised some moderation on other factions, the leaders of which were anti-British. The war-party had alway been active even before 1839. But Bhim Sen's departure from the political scene gave an unfettered hand to the leaders of the war-party. The Governor-General was alive to this situation. He felt clearly that the tragic end of Bhim Sen left the war party supreme in Nepal. Hodgson made the king understand the danger to his dynasty, which the resentment of the Governor General implied. The poor creature again drew away from the war-party.[27] For a time the war-party in Nepal was cowed.

But the year 1840 opened with the war-party again supreme in the country. The party was headed by the senior queen and her favourite Pandey. On the 10th February 1840, Ranjung Pandey was appointed as the Prime Minister. On the 4 May, 1840 the marriage of the Heir-Apparent was celebrated. But shortly after this ceremony, the British Resident was summoned to the Durbar, where he had an interview of a private nature with the Maharaja and the Maharani, who declared that the marriage of their son must be dissolved, as certain ill-omned marks on the bride had been discovered, which prevented the Prince from approaching. These marks were subsequently found out to be only temporary.

25 W. W. Hunter, life of Brian Hodgson, p. 176.
26 Foreign Secret Consultations, 1841, p. 270.
27 W. W. Hunter, Life of Brian Hodgson, p. 278.

It was believed that this palace Fracas was got up by the Maharani to keep the Maharaja in perpetual distress and anxiety, with a view to disgust him with the cares of royalty and to induce his resignation in favour of his son, under whom as Regent, the Maharani and her creature Ranjung Pandey, would possess uncontrolled power over the kingdom.[28]

The administration had completely broken down, owing to these internal conflicts. On the 21st June, 1840 a grand parade was ordered, the object of which was the announcement of a long contemplated reduction of pay. The soldiers at once mutinied. The mutineers, after ransacking the house of Choutaria Pushkar Shah proceeded to the city, where they continued their devastations until 2 O'Clock in the morning. At this stage the Maharani set out for Thankot. The mutineers went to the house of Ranjung Pandey. He pacified the soldiers. On the morning of 22nd, the Maharaja accompanied by the whole of the troops proceeded to Thankot to bring back the Maharani. In the afternoon of that day the royal pair returned to Kathmandu. There was every reason to believe that the Maharani and her favourite Ranjung Pandey were the principal, although secret, instigator.[29] The senior queen was at the root of the trouble. She was anti-British and she wanted to create a wedge between the Maharaja and the English. She planned to assassinate Hodgson on June 21, 1840 but she did not succeed in her nefarious game. There were persons in the court, who wanted to bring an improvement in the relations between the Durbar and the English. Such persons induced the Maharaja at length, to dismiss from the Council of Minister Ranjung Pandey, the alleged leader of a faction hostile to the British Government and on the 1st November 1840 Fateh Jung Choutaria was nominated to the premiership.[30]

Thus Hodgson had secured in his task of constituting a new Ministry, which was friendly to the English. It was a remarkable contribution of Hodgson's diplomacy. He secured by peaceful means, what Lord Auckland had in August only hoped to obtain by a war. Auckland applauded Hodgson's efforts to obtain by diplomacy the change of Ministry. At the beginning of November, he officially authorised the Resident "to promote to the utmost degree, consistent with prudence, the object of procuring the removal of the present Minister of Nepal and the appointment of a frien-

28 Nicholette Papers, p. 4.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

30 W. W. Hunter, Life of Brian Hodgson, p. 193.

dly and honest administration in this place". The day before the dispatch was written in Calcutta Hodgson had already secured the desired result at Kathmandu and a new ministry was formed on November 1, 1849. The change of the ministry meant the Public abandonment of the war party by the king. So congratulation began to pour to the resident. It was felt indeed that Hodgson had single-handed saved the necessity of a war at a time, when war would have been an impossibility for the British Government. 'We entirely concur', wrote the Court of Directors to the Governor-General, 'in the praise which you have bestowed on Mr. Hodgson. He had performed his difficult task without even a show of force'.[31] The senior queen was sad at the turn of events. So she stood aside, watchful and vindictive, but powerless for the present.

The inauguration of tha new Ministry could not bring any change in the country. The tone of the administration could not improve; owing to the violent character of the Maharani, the duplicity and subservience to that lady of the Maharaja and the new Minister's indecision and want of energy.[32]

The opening of 1841 was marked by the Durbar's reiterated expressions of acquiscene in the firendly counsels of the Governor-General. About this time, 94 chiefs of the opposition factions entered into a solemn engagement with the Resident to maintain friendship and good faith with the British Government. The Maharani, who for a series of years had taken such an active part in the politics of the country, finding all her schemes foiled and her party completely ousted from power in a moment of disappointment and indignation, set off for Hetowra, declaring her intention of a pilgrimage to Benares. She was shortly followed by the Maharaja and Heir-Apparent. The friendly but firm submission of the British Resident at length induced the royal party to return to the palace. On arrival at Kathmandu, the first act of the Maharani was to summon to her presence her favourite Ranjung Pandey. The motive, which led Her Highness to have recourse to these proceedings, was to overturn, if possible, the recent solemnly guaranteed engagement with the British Government. On the 6th of October, Her Highness, the Maharani died of the malarious fever 'owul' which she contacted during her sojourn at Hetowra. Suspicions were at one time entertained that poison had been administered to her, but was subsequently proved that these surmises were groundless.[33]

31 *Ibid.*

32 Nicholette papers, p. 111.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Thus the anti-British forces eclipsed for some time. Rajendra Vir Vikram Shah, the king of the country, presented a remarkable document to the Resident. It was mentioned in the document that as desired by the Governor-General, he dismissed those persons who were responsible for straining the good understanding between the two governments. The king's policy was supported by the royal collaterals and the Brahmins. The reign of terror under the queen's favourite was at an end. The spiritual leaders, royal kinsman and chiefs of Nepal joined together to the number of ninety-four and they signed a declaration mentioning that they were friends of the English. They also declared that they would undertake safety of the British Resident. Thus Brian Hodgson's policy succeeded. He was now master of the situation. The senior queen failed in her object and lost all her hopes. Being desperate, she started for Benares and died on the way at Hetowra due to malarious fever on 6 October, 1841.[34]

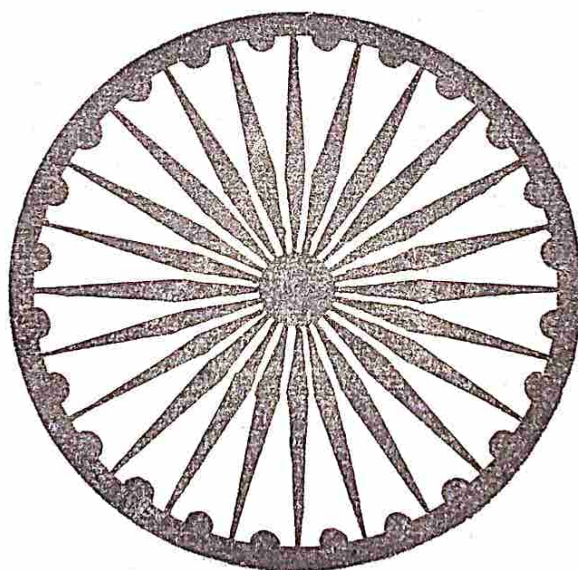
Thus, the period from 1832 to 1841 is important in the history of modern Nepal. Lalita Tripura Sundari, the widow of Ran Bahadur Shah was the chief force in the administration but she died in 1832. Her death brought several problems, which culminated in the tragic and cruel end of Bhim Sen, who was an outstanding statesman of Nepal. The King's Chief wife, known as the senior queen, who had tried to assert her authority with the help of the Pandeys, died in 1841. Her death prepared the ground for a friendly understanding between the Nepal Durbar and the Government of India.

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